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28 Feb 1978, DoDD 5200.10; AGO D/A ltr dtd 29 Apr 1980	

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# **SECURITY**

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⑨ Combat after action rept,

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HACV-IVC (12 Feb 66)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Cai Be Ambush

(HACV/208/J3/32)

Headquarters, Senior Advisor, Advisory Team 96150-05 Forces 96215

TO: COMUSMACV, ATTN: J321, APO US Forces 96243

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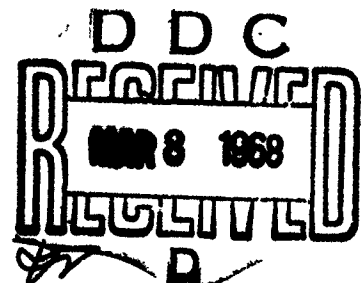
1. I have read and studied the report submitted by the Senior Advisor 7th Division. The facts, conclusions, and recommendations are in accordance with information gathered by the IV Corps Advisory Staff during and immediately subsequent to the episode.

2. I concur with the findings of the Senior Advisor 7th Infantry Division and recommend no disciplinary action be taken against US Advisory personnel.

3. This entire incident has been discussed with the 7th, 9th and 21st Division Senior Advisors, the CG IV Corps and the Commanders of the ARVN Divisions. Copies of the report are being furnished each division in IV Corps and the Corps Commander. Further recommend that the lessons learned be made available to all appropriate commanders.

⑩ Sidney B. Barry, Jr.

GEORGE A. BARTEN  
Colonel, Infantry  
Senior Advisor



⑪ 12 Feb 66

⑫ 14 p.

⑬ OACSFOR

⑭ OT-RD-66X047

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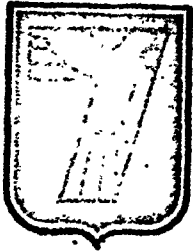
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**HEADQUARTERS**

**7TH INFANTRY DIVISION ADVISORY DETACHMENT**  
**US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam**  
**APO San Francisco 96359**



**HACV-IT-SA**

**12 February 1966**

**SUBJECT: Cai Be Ambush After Action Report (HACV/RCS/J3/32)**

**THRU: Senior Advisor**  
**IV Corps**  
**Advisory Team 96**  
**APO US Forces 96215**

**TO: Commander**  
**U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam**  
**ATTN: J321**  
**APO US Forces 96243**

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1. **GENERAL.** In compliance with HACV Directive Number 335-8, this report is submitted on the Viet Cong ambush of a motor convoy consisting of 24 vehicles carrying the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division to Chi Lang Training Center, Chau Doc Province. The ambush occurred at about 0850 hours, Monday, 7 February 1966, along Highway 4 in the eastern portion of Cai Be District, Dinh Tuong Province, 7th Division Tactical Area.

2. **PURPOSE.** This cover letter is my personal review and evaluation of the salient events of the ambush and surrounding circumstances with a view toward determining what happened; why; and, of greatest importance to prosecution of the joint US-GVN effort, what lessons can be learned or re-learned and what can be done to reduce to an absolute minimum the possibility of similar incidents. I have also sought to determine if disciplinary action against US advisory personnel is appropriate.

3. **BASIS.** I have been Senior Advisor, 7th Infantry Division since 4 August 1965. One day following the ambush, I returned to the division after a month's absence. My report, therefore, is based on the information contained in the attached documents; extensive interviews of appropriate US advisors; conversations with the division commander and members of his staff; aerial and ground inspection of the ambush site (3 days after the ambush) accompanied by appropriate US advisors

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and the 7th Division Deputy for Operations. Underlying all this, of course, is my personal knowledge and experience as Division Senior Advisor since August 1965. I have personally directed, organized, supervised the compilation of this entire after action report.

k. **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS.** Detailed accounts, factual information, advisors' statements, and maps and sketches can be found in the supporting documents. They are organized as follows:

Tab A - Maps and Sketches

Tab B - Factual Ambush After Action Report, MACV Format

Tab C - Chronology of Ambush and Related Events

Tab D - Narrative Account of Ambush and Related Events

Tab E - Advisors' Statements

Tab F - 7th Division ARVN and US G-3 Logs for 7 February 1966

Tab G - Summary of 7th Division - Dinh Tuong Sector Command Relationships for Security of Highway 4, July 1965-February 1966

5. **WHAT HAPPENED.** Following are the salient events that actually happened, as I can best determine.

a. **Widespread Knowledge of 1/11 Move.** In early January CO, 1/11 and his advisor learned of scheduled move to training center. During second week of January they learned the movement date of 7 February. Many members of the battalion, their families, and persons outside the battalion probably had early knowledge of the date and destination of the scheduled move.

b. **Change of 1/11 Advisory Team.** Composition of the 1/11 advisory team was changed 4-6 February. Captain Roof, after a two day overlap, replaced Captain Gillette as Battalion Advisor. SFC Shriver replaced M/Sgt Barry, who had been wounded and evacuated on 2 February. 1st Lt Draughn, who has been with the battalion since October 1965, remained as assistant battalion advisor. Captain Gillette was assigned as Assistant G-5 Advisor with the additional duty of accompanying the 7th Reconnaissance Company on operations as an advisor. Captain Roof took over as battalion advisor on 6 February. Captain Roof has been Assistant G-5 Advisor since December and has accompanied the 7th Recon Company on several operations.

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c. Division Operation. On 6 February, 7th Division planned for 7 February an operation in Long Dinh District, Dinh Tuong Sector to the north of Highway 4. Plans included movement of a division CP to Long Dinh district town; employment, one platoon of armed helicopters; a USAF F4C L-19 and five scheduled air strikes; and the single USA L-19 allocated. The division field CP opened at Long Dinh at 070630 February. The first battalion crossed its LD at 0600 hours. The Division CO, his operational staff, and the Deputy Senior Advisor and his operational staff advisors were at the field CP at Long Dinh.

d. Arrangements for Convoy. On 5 February 7th Division informed Dinh Tuong Sector of 1/11 convoy move scheduled along Highway 4 on 7 February, directed Sector to secure the route from My Tho westward to My Thuan ferry across the Mekong, and stated that division TCC would provide L-19 for air cover. On 6 February Dinh Tuong Sector informed Sub-sectors that an important convoy moves on 7 February from My Tho to My Thuan ferry and directed Sub-sectors to assure security within sub-sector areas before 070730, ending at 1800. On 6 February CO 1/11 and Advisor requested L-19 carrying artillery FO as column cover for convoy. ARVN and US TCC personnel sought allocation of two L-19's to cover both 7th Division operation and 1/11 convoy scheduled for 7 February. Either one VNAF and one USA L-19 or two USA L-19's would have been acceptable. They were successful in getting only one L-19, a US Army aircraft. Jointly the ARVN-US TCC personnel decided that due to the proximity of the division operational area and the convoy route, one L-19 aircraft could visually reconnoiter the convoy route and support both the division operation and the convoy cover. 1/11 was instructed to be in the south side of My Thuan ferry by 070930 February.

e. Intelligence. Prior to 7 February there was no indication of unusual Viet Cong activities along Highway 4 that might indicate an impending ambush or attack on 1/11 convoy.

f. Deception Plan. The afternoon of 6 February 7th Division moved 1/11 eastward from Long Dinh away from My Thuan ferry to Tan Hiep town. Information was disseminated that 1/11 would probably move to the training center by air.

g. Composition of 1/11 Convoy. The 1/11 convoy which departed Tan Hiep town about 070800 February consisted of twenty 2 1/2 ton trucks and four jeeps. 343 members of the battalion, some dependents, three US advisors, and personal and unit equipment were loaded on the 24 vehicles. Order of loading from head to rear was 1st, Headquarters, 2d, and 3d companies.

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h. Clearing Highway 4 in Ambush Site, Cai Be District. At about 070630 February, one RF platoon of 20 men moved south from My Thanh post to clear the east side of Highway 4. At about the same time one PF platoon of 30 men moved north from Cai Be RJ to clear the east side of Highway 4. By about 0750 at a point roughly midway between the two start points, the RF platoon set up a "blocking position" along Highway 4. The PF platoon, after making physical contact with the RF platoon position, returned to a "security position" to the south along Highway 4. At approximately 0820 both units were attacked by the Viet Cong. The RF platoon position suffered 3 KIA and 5 WIA and withdrew across Highway 4 and to the northwest until it was out of contact. It then went into a "defensive position" to the west of Highway 4. The PF platoon suffered no casualties and apparently withdrew to Cai Be RJ. Vietnamese reports, which I am unable to confirm, state that the RF platoon informed Cai Be Sub-sector headquarters of the VC attack and that Sub-sector then directed My Thuan post and a PF outpost north of the ambush area to halt the 1/11 convoy and warn it of the ambush. The fact is that the 1/11 was not warned of the VC attack on the RF and PF platoons, nor was Dinh Tuong Sector or 7th Division. Between about 0810 and 0830 the USA L-19 aircraft with ARVN artillery FO made a visual reconnaissance of Highway 4 from My Tho to My Thuan ferry. Neither the pilot nor his observer reported anything suspicious.

i. 1/11 Approaches the Ambush. As the 1/11 convoy approached the ambush site, the 24 vehicles were traveling at about 60-70 kms/hour and were about 100 meters apart. The battalion advisor estimates the entire column was about 2000-2500 meters long. The Bn CO was in the twelfth vehicle, the advisory team in the fourteenth. An ammunition truck was between them. The battalion advisor had his radio tuned to the division operational frequency. No aircraft was overhead. There was no indication of danger. The troops were mostly sitting on seats along the truck side and facing inward.

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j. The Ambush. At about 0850, as the head of the convoy was about 300 meters north of Cai Be RJ and the advisory jeep was about 1500 meters behind the lead vehicle, the Viet Cong opened heavy automatic weapons fire from both sides of the road and some mortar and 57mm recoilless rifle fire. Most of the fire came from west of Highway 4. The lead 14 vehicles with the advisory jeep at the end speeded up and dashed toward Cai Be RJ while their occupants fired to both sides of the road. These 14 vehicles closed up fairly tight, stopped at Cai Be RJ, their occupants dismounted and deployed to defend themselves against heavy enemy fire they were still receiving from both sides of the highway but mostly from a longer range than where the ambush was sprung opposite the advisory vehicle.

Unknown to either the Bn CO or the advisor, the vehicle immediately behind the advisor's jeep had stopped on the road near the site of the initial fire and the rest of the column had closed up behind him and halted along the road. The halted column stretched about 400 meters. Here the Viet Cong, from positions in thick, chest-high grass, rice, and vegetation within as close as 15 meters of the road delivered a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire on the halted vehicles and on their passengers who had either become casualties on the vehicles or had returned fire, dismounted, and sought protection beside the road. Some troops apparently attempted to assault the Viet Cong. The rear part of the convoy obviously was caught in the main ambush. Viet Cong fire was heaviest here. The Viet Cong assaulted the soldiers of the 1/11, inflicted heavy casualties on them and captured large amounts of equipment. This fight was over in 15 or 20 minutes at the most, and the Viet Cong began their withdrawal. The largest VC force, which was to the west of the highway, withdrew to the west. At about the same time the ambush was sprung, several 81mm mortar rounds were fired into Cai Be district town, inflicting light casualties, and several 60mm mortar rounds landed near elements of the 2/6 armor troop located near Cai Be RJ.

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k. Assistance Potentially Available to 1/11. Potentially available for reinforcement or assistance of the 1/11 were the following forces and weapons: two APC troops, two 105mm artillery tubes, a platoon of armed helicopters, and a flight of F-100's. 2/6 Armor troop was deployed around Cai Be RJ. Its mission was that of a reaction force along Highway 4. 3/6 Armor troop was in Cai Lay district town about 9 kms from the ambush. Its normal mission was that of reaction force for use along Highway 4, but today it had been designated as a second reserve for the division operation, to be only employed after employment of the 1/6 Armor troop in the division operational area. Neither troop had been informed of the 1/11 convoy movement.

When lead 1/11 elements arrived at Cai Be RJ, 2/6 was under enemy fire; temporarily without officers and advisors, who were eating breakfast in Cai Be; and was oriented toward attacking enemy troops and suspected 60 mm mortar positions almost due west of Cai Be RJ, rather than toward assisting the 1/11 convoy of which 2/6 was virtually unaware. 3/6 was unaware of the ambush situation until about 0900 when CO, 6th Armor alerted it for a possible move to the ambush area. The armed helicopter platoon was on the ground at Binh Duc airstrip at My Tho, about 37 km to the east. The F-100 flight was orbiting with its FAC over the division operational area. The USA L-19 with its ARVN artillery FO was over the western part of the division operational area. The artillery platoon at Cai Be was unaware of the 1/11 situation but within supporting range. VNAF fighters were at Can Tho, 50 kms away.

## 1. Actions After Ambush was Triggered.

(1) 1/11. The 1/11 fought two separate fights. The part of 1/11 near Cai Be RJ, which included 1st Co, some of Headquarters Co, the Bn CO, and the advisory team, dismounted and fought to both east and west of the highway. Its fight partially overlapped the fight of the 2/6 troop, which apparently thought it was fighting its own separate battle. The rear part of 1/11, caught in the main ambush about 1600 meters north of Cai Be RJ, was fighting its separate battle for survival. That fight probably ended by 0905 or 0910, when the VC had accomplished their mission and started to withdraw. About 0920 roughly 10 minutes after 2/6 began attacking northwestward along highway 4, 1st Co began advancing north along highway 4 and linked up with the rear element of 1/11 about 0935. From then until about 1700, the 1/11 worked at care and evacuation of wounded and dead, salvaging equipment, policing the ambush site, repairing vehicles, and preparing for return to Long Dinh.

(2) 2/6. 2/6 troop promptly defended itself when it came under attack at about 0850. Its officers and advisors rejoined about 0855. About 0910 2/6 began an attack against suspected VC locations northwest of Cai Be RJ. This attack eventually was turned in a more northerly direction along the west side of Highway 4. It thus assisted 1st Co, 1/11 in its advance to link up with the rear element of 1/11. 2/6 continued attacking the withdrawing VC until about 1500 when it withdrew to Highway 4. 2/6 advisor was unaware 1/11 had been ambushed until about 1100.

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(3) 3/6. Shortly after 0900 3/6 troop was alerted by CO, 6th Armor Squadron to be prepared to move from Cai Lay to Cai Be RJ. When the CO, 6th Armor arrived at 3/6 location, 3/6 moved towards the ambush site and at about 1015 attacked suspected VC locations west of Highway 4 and north of the ambush site. It attacked withdrawing VC until about 1500 when 3/6 withdrew to Highway 4.

(4) USAF FAC and F-100 Flight. Division CP, which received first word of the ambush at 0856, immediately diverted USAF FAC and his F-100 flight from division operational area to ambush site. FAC arrived over ambush about 0902. His F-100's had sufficient fuel to remain on station about 30 minutes. FAC sized up the situation, felt that he was able to distinguish friendly from enemy position, requested permission for 1/11 CO to select air targets, requested permission to put in air strikes, had permission denied about 0925, and diverted to division operational area. His F-100's and a flight of F-4's which arrived about 0922. The FAC was extremely frustrated and bitter that his air reserve had not been used at the ambush site. FAC put in air strikes to west of Highway 4 from about 1000-1300.

(5) Artillery and USA L-19. USA L-19 aircraft with ARVN artillery FO arrived over ambush site about 0859. This aircraft was primary radio relay between 1/11 USAF FAC aircraft and the Command and Control Helicopter carrying Division Commander and Deputy Senior Advisor. He also adjusted artillery fire. About 0918 two artillery tubes at Cai Be began firing to east of Highway 4. At 1000 hours 4 artillery tubes which had been moved from the division operational area arrived at Cai Lay and began firing on suspected VC withdrawal routes east of Highway 4.

(6) Armed Helicopters. Ordered at 0901 to depart Binh Duc airstrip near My Tho and go to ambush site, armed platoon arrived at ambush site about 0928 and commenced to operate west of Highway 4 against targets requested by 1/11 and the two armor troops and against targets of opportunity. Assisted with evacuating casualties. Returned to division operational area at 1230.

(7) VNAF. VNAF FAC arrived over ambush site about 0920 and started putting in VNAF air strikes west of Highway 4 on withdrawal routes about 0945.

(8) CO, 1/11 and Advisor. Upon arrival Cai Be RJ En CO dismounted; reported his situation to division as he knew it; organized his defense; attempted unsuccessfully to contact his rear element; sought to get the 2/6 troop to attack north along Highway 4; requested artillery and air support; sent his 1st Company north to link up with the rear element of 1/11; after 2/6 began its attack to the northwest on the west side of the highway, met the division commander and DSA when they landed near him about 0940; went to main ambush area and only then realized how heavily the VC had attacked his rear element; and then supervised evacuation, policing, repair, and move back to Long Dinh.

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1/11 Advisor reported to division CP the 1/11 situation as he knew it, first reporting at 0856. He requested artillery and armed helicopter support; provided targets to USA L-19, which acted as radio relay for him; assisted the battalion commander with his duties during the fight, advance to the main ambush site, evacuation, and activities preparing for move back to Long Dinh.

(9) 11th Regimental Commander and Advisor. CO, 11th Regiment and his Advisor were fully engaged with the division operation. The CO was informed of the ambush as soon as division knew of it, but he could influence the action in no way. Nor could his advisor.

(10) Division Commander and Deputy Senior Advisor. At 0856 at his field CP at Long Dinh, Division CO was informed of the ambush. He diverted F-100's to the ambush area; directed the armed helicopter platoon to go the ambush area; ordered CO, 6th Armor to send assistance to 1/11; sent four artillery tubes from the division operational area to support the 1/11. Then Division CO with his Deputy for Operations, the Deputy Senior Advisor, and G3 Advisor boarded the C&C helicopter and departed for the ambush area. While aloft and enroute to the ambush site both the Division CO and DSA attempted to get situation report from 1/11 and from Division CP in order to determine how to use the available air, artillery, and armed helicopter support. The C&C radio console functioned improperly, and both Vietnamese and American had great communications difficulties from the C&C helicopter. About 0925 the Division CO and DSA ship arrived over the ambush site, orbited and attempted to ascertain the situation, landed about 0940, and proceeded to the main ambush site. While airborne, Division CO, not knowing the ground situation and location of friendly and enemy troops, denied USAF FAC permission to use air support in the immediate ambush area and directed the artillery to fire east of Highway 4 and the armed helicopters to operate west of Highway 4. After learning more about the situation, he authorized use of air west of the highway along routes of withdrawal. A VNAF air strike went in about 0945. Upon reaching the location of the main ambush and seeing the situation there, Division CO directed that evacuation begin by air and road.

Deputy Senior Advisor and G-3 Advisor assisted their counterparts in the above activities; attempted to ascertain the situation through use of US communications; kept the Division CO and Deputy for Operations informed of the status of US support and of the ground situation as reported through US channels; recommended use of support; and worked closely with their counterparts in attempting to remove some of the thick fog of war from what they knew was a critical situation. They, too, were handicapped by the faulty functioning of the console radios. The pilot, Warrior 6, attempted to relay for them.

m. Pursuit of Viet Cong. Limited pursuit of the Viet Cong was conducted by the two armored troops who attacked perhaps as far as 500-600 meters west of Highway 4 and principally by air, artillery, and armed helicopters firepower.

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## n. Aftermath.

(1) 1/11 losses. Personnel: of 343 soldiers in the convoy 74 were KIA, 44 KIA, 46 KIA. Equipment: 1 PMS-6, 8 PMS-10, 7 pistols, 1 60mm mortar, 1 81 mm mortar, 1 57 mm IR, 6 S&G, 8 BAR's, 3 M-79 grenade launchers, 1 30 cal MG, 33 M-1 rifles, 65 carbines.

(2) Known VC losses. 33 KIA confirmed. 1 P.W. Little equipment captured. Two weapons captured. 1 BAR, 1 LMG, 3 carbines, two 5-kilo mines with detonating wire found west of the ambush site.

(3) Future of 1/11. The battalion did not go to training center as scheduled. It must now rest, refit, recruit, train, and be made into virtually a new battalion.

e. 7th Division G-2's Estimate of How Ambush Was Set Up. Basing his estimate primarily on his interrogation of the VC prisoner taken near the ambush site, the Division G-2 has reconstructed the probable setting up of the ambush in the following manner. The VC prisoner claimed to be a member of the 263 Bn. The ambush probably had been planned for a long time and was probably directed specifically toward the 1/11. It was conducted by the 263 Bn (-) operating west of Highway 4 and two district companies, Cai Be and Cai Lay, to the east of Highway 4. The two district companies impressed about 100-150 civilians as laborers, porters, and hostages. About 500 from the 263 Bn (-) and 100-200 from the two district companies were involved in the ambush, both attack and supporting troops. The 263 Bn (-) moved into the ambush site from northwest of Highway 4, spending 3-4 February about 15 kms northwest of the ambush site and 5-6 February about seven kms away. Early morning of 7 February, the VC ambush troops dropped their packs and heavy equipment in the forward assembly area, moved forward to establish and conduct the ambush, and planned to return to pick up equipment. The district companies moved from the east to the ambush site and established a blocking position east of Highway 4. 263 (-) withdrew to the northwest and the district companies to the east.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENTS BASED ON "WHAT HAPPENED". The following specific conclusions are directed to points developed in paragraph 5 above. Comments are made when considered appropriate. General conclusions will be listed in the following paragraph.

a. Viet Cong probably were aware of the details of scheduled 1/11 move sufficiently early to plan rehearse, and execute an ambush designed expressly for that the 1/11th move.

b. Because 1/11 was moving to a training center for several weeks training, there was probably a feeling among some Vietnamese and Americans involved with a convoy arrangements that this was more nearly an "administrative" than "operational" move and that an enemy attack was less likely

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in Dinh Tuong Province than outside the 7th LTA. This feeling probably contributed to an unconscious relaxation of vigilance.

c. Change of the composition of the 1/11 advisory team at this time was logical and had little or no adverse effect on the performance of the advisory team and the battalion during this incident.

Comment. Since Captain Gillette will depart Vietnam at the time the 1/11 was scheduled to complete its training, it was desirable to assign a new advisor having time remaining for post-training service with the battalion. Captain Roof's operational experience as advisor to the 7th Reconnaissance Company had acquainted him with the type warfare that prevails here. Lieutenant Draughn's previous four month's service with 1/11 provided advisor continuity.

d. Command arrangements for security of Highway 4 are faulty and division of responsibility between division and sector unclear.

Comment. While division was responsible for the 1/11 convoy movement, sector was responsible for securing the route. Unity of command is absent and there is no single point of responsibility for coordination/ everything affecting either a security mission or a convoy movement or the two together.

e. Staff planning and supervision of arrangements for the convoy were faulty.

Comment. The convoy should have included armored vehicles and had L-19 column cover. Reaction units along the route were not notified the convoy was coming: 6th Armor, 2/6, 3/6. Inadequate comprehensive communications system exists for rapid reporting and exchange of information of all units concerned with security and convoy movement.

f. Execution of the route security mission was faulty.

Comment. Although the RF-PF platoons made contact with the Viet Cong in the ambush area, 1/11 was not halted and warned.

g. The Viet Cong ambush was masterfully executed.

Comment. With a force of 600-700 Viet Cong covering such a large area so near Highway 4, one would think that at least one civilian would warn GVN forces of the threat.

h. Division units and US advisory personnel need more effective

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training in convoy organization, conduct, and reaction to ambush.

i. The potential was present for providing more effective and more rapid assistance to 1/11 after the ambush was triggered, particularly F-100 and F-4 flights and probably artillery at Cai Be.

Comment. The Division Commander had a far less clear picture of the ground situation than did the FAC or the USA F-100 pilot and ARVN artillery FO. And while in the CAC helicopter, the Division Commander and the Deputy Senior Advisor were beset with communications difficulties. In retrospect, the Division Commander and his Advisor could probably have influenced the action more effectively had they remained at the division C.P. and sent their representatives forward in the helicopter. There is also great merit in giving the commander on the ground in a critical situation, in this case CO 1/11, target approval authority for air and artillery.

j. Engagement of five ARVN battalions in the division operation in Long Binh virtually eliminated the division's capability to pursue quickly the withdrawing Viet Cong.

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7. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS. I have reached the following overall conclusions concerning the ambush and related matter.

a. While it is impossible to eliminate completely all possibility of an ambush, the 7th Division and its US advisory detachment should have taken several steps which would have greatly reduced the likelihood of ambush of the 1/11 convoy. These steps lie principally in the realm of more effective command arrangements for security of Highway 4 and of improving staff planning and supervision. Much of this ambush incident was characterized by absence of the high standards of military professionalism of which the 7th Division and its Advisory Detachment are capable.

b. The central problem to be solved is the unsatisfactory command arrangement and unclear assignment of responsibility relating to security of Highway 4 in Dinh Tuong Province. Until unity of command responsibility exists for security of Highway 4, there is little hope for appreciably increasing security along that route. (See Tab G for several command arrangements for Highway 4 that have been tried since July 1965 and found wanting.

c. While reaction of some potential reinforcements to ambush of 1/11<sup>W</sup> is slow and uncertain, no real basis exists for charging Vietnamese decision-makers or their American advisors with grossly wrong decisions or incompetence. One might disagree with some of the decisions made; but at the same time, he must appreciate the circumstances under which they were made, the limited and often confusing information available at the time, and the reasoning on which they were based.

d. Current RVNAF and MACV anti-ambush doctrine and procedures, if faithfully and intelligently adhered to, are sound and adequate.

e. Disciplinary action against any US advisor is inappropriate.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS. I recommend that:

a. Units due to attend training centers be scheduled for movement at the latest time possible and moved preferably by air but habitually by a different plan from that first announced.

b. This ambush and its inherent lessons be summarized and widely distributed among RVNAF and MACV forces.

c. No disciplinary action be initiated against any US advisor.

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12 February 1966

SUBJECT: Cai Be Ambush After Action Report (MACV/RCS/J3/32)

9. LESSONS LEARNED. No new lessons were learned. Old, familiar lessons were re-learned and reaffirmed. That is the tragedy and professional shame of the entire incident.

10. PLANS TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE. To seek to prevent future ambushes and similar enemy attacks, I intend to work on two levels:

a. I will work with my counterpart, 7th Division Commander, to find more effective solutions to the problems mentioned above, particularly the basic problem of more effective command arrangements for security of Highway 4.

b. I will increase the sensitivity to threat of ambush, awareness of the need for constant security and professional competence of members of the 7th Division Advisory Detachment to prevent or deal with ambushes.

*Sidney B. Berry, Jr.*

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